ROUND 11 CAPITAL PROJECT NOMINATION FORM
LAKE TAHOE FEDERAL SHARE EIP CAPITAL PROJECTS
APPENDIX K

Project Name:	Prescribed Fire/BiomassTreatment	**EIP Number: (*Required*)**	10179.205
Federal Agency Sponsor: (*Required*)	USFS-LTBMU	**Contact:**	John Washington
Threshold:	Vegetation	**Phone Number:**	530-543-2652
Threshold Standard:	Common Veg/ Hazardous Fuels	**Email:**	jwashington@fs.fed.us
FUNDING REQUESTED IN THIS ROUND:	**$** 1,250,000		

Federal Share EIP Consideration

Select "yes" or "no" for each question. If you have a "yes" response, briefly describe. ***Projects must meet one or more of these 5 items.***

1. **Does the project involve federal land? If yes, is the federal land involved important to successful implementation of the project?** — ***Yes*** ☒ ***No*** ☐

This project is located on National Forest System lands within the Wildland Urban Interface of the Lake Tahoe Basin.

2. **Is this project identified in the EIP? If yes, please ensure the EIP number is identified in the above project information box. If no, provide a description of the projects contribution to the EIP program.** — ***Yes*** ☒ ***No*** ☐

This project is listed in the EIP as 10179.205 for Rounds 6, 7, 8, and 9.

3. **Does the project involve the conservation of a federal or regional threatened, rare, endangered, or special interest species?** — ***Yes*** ☒ ***No*** ☐

Included in the this project's environmental planning process was the objective to protect or improve habitat for Forest Service Management Indicator Species (MIS) as well as threatened, endangered, or sensitive species. Treatment areas being treated under this project that are located near Protected Activity Centers (PACs) for Northern goshawk and California spotted owls have limited operating periods to minimize disturbance during the nesting season.

4. **Does the project involve an identified federal interest such as the detection and eradication of non-native invasive species (aquatic or terrestrial)? If yes, identify the species?** — ***Yes*** ☒ ***No*** ☐

Field surveys were conducted to detect terrestrial invasive species. Based on these surveys, the proposed hazardous fuels reduction treatments would be implemented to minimize the further spread of invasive species as well as project monitoring to ensure that if new locations are detected, control measures can be taken.

5. **Does the project contribute to supporting implementation of capital projects in the EIP? Such projects that fulfill this function would include technical assistance, data management, and/or resource inventories?** — ***Yes*** ☐ ***No*** ☒

Check all Capital Focus Area(s) that apply:

- ☒ 1. **Watershed and Habitat Improvement**
- ☒ 2. **Forest Health**
- ☒ 3. **Air Quality and Transportation**
- ☐ 4. **Recreation and Scenic**

Check all that apply (must meet a minimum of one category):

- ☒ 1. **Continued emphasis on forest ecosystem health/fuels reduction projects considering the LTBMU Stewardship Fireshed Assessment and Lake Tahoe Basin Multi-Jurisdictional Fuels Reduction and Wildfire Prevention Strategy.**

- ☒ 2. **Continued implementation of projects approved in Rounds 5 through 10 which implement the EIP. Project proposal should clearly describe the phase/product being produced along with the consequence of not completing the project phase proposed for Round 10.**

List Rounds and funding:

Round	Funding ($)	Accomplishment (acres)
Round 6	1,077,500	1,500
Round 7	1,000,000	1,850
Round 8	1,000,000	1,775
Round 9	1,349,000	4,112

- ☐ *3.* **Project is consistent with and contributes toward TMDL pollutant reductions within the four source categories (atmospheric, urban & groundwater, forested uplands, and stream channel).** ***NOTE: If "yes", then please respond to questions in the accomplishments section of the nomination proposal.***

- ☐ 4. **Control of aquatic invasive species and prevention and/or detection of new aquatic invasive species.**

Project Nomination Proposal Outline

Project Summary (a brief summary which clearly describes the proposed project –maximum 200 words)

- Summarize ONLY this Round 11 project**.**

Continue to implement hazardous fuel reduction on approximately 2,262 acres throughout the Wildland Urban Interface on National Forest System lands of the Lake Tahoe Basin. This consists primarily of prescribed burning and secondarily removing and/or chipping biomass of existing hand piles and fuels that were produced from thinning treatments. Where access currently exists hand piled fuels may be removed for biomass utilization as opposed to prescribed burning. Biomass removal would be accomplished at a similar cost per acre as prescribed burning. This proposal addresses the funding that is required to complete biomass treatment (burning or pile chipping/slash removal) within the Quail, Ward, Kingsbury, Slaughterhouse, and Roundhill Projects along the West and East shores of Lake Tahoe respectively.

Previous funding for these above projects did not completly cover the costs associated for the prescribed fire treatment as described in this proposal. Funding this proposal addresses the need for fuel treatment as outlined in the Lake Tahoe Basin Multi-jurisdictional Fuels Reduction and Wildfire Prevention Strategy and would begin to restore forest stands to a condition that allows firefighters to safely and effectively suppress wildfires.

Proposed treatments may be accomplished using Forest Service crews and Forest Service administered contracts and agreements that would utilize crews from local Fire Protection Districts, and other agencies.

Project Description

Introduction

- Provide project background which explains the situation and state the problem and how it will be addressed.

Note: *Focus needs to be the project in Round 11 not a history of an ongoing project or program.*

Prior to SNPLMA, costs associated with initial thinning treatments varied from project to project. Thinning treatment costs related to economic factors such as increased fuel prices and closure of nearby mills and processing facilities, resulted in a priority to thinning first and then to prescribed burning (which is a follow-up treatment to thinning). There are 2,262 acres of previously thinned areas on National Forest System Lands in Lake Tahoe in which follow-up fuels treatment using prescribed burning or chipping/biomass removal was not completely covered by project implementation dollars from previous funded rounds or appropriations. It is essential that these acres be addressed for finishing follow-up fuels treatment because of the close proximity to neighborhoods and communities within the Wildland Urban Interface. Funding for this proposal will address a portion of this need. Furthermore, over 50% of the projects acreage is in what is known as fire regime condition class 3. In simple terms this means that more than 50% of the forest area (measured at the landscape) is in a severe departure from historic fire conditions and is not within a fire frequency occurrence as associated with its forest type. Prescribed burning treatments in this proposal would bring the project areas closer towards their historic fire frequency measured as condition class 1 or 2 after treatment. This is primarily associated with low intensity surface fires for these forest types.

Fuels that were treated under the Quail, Ward, Slaughterhouse, Kingsbury, and Roundhill projects are in a cured (dry) condition that warrants immediate prescribed burning. Safe and effective prescribed burning involves favorable fuel moistures, weather conditions, and available burning personnel and resources. In many cases favorable conditions are limited to short time periods throughout the fall to spring seasons. As a means to minimize the need for

prescribed burning where burning conditions are limited, this proposal includes the option to chip the fuels or remove them as biomass. Where there is available access (e.g. topography and transportation) chipping or biomass removal may occur. This is estimated to be approximately 10% of the project's acreage (220 acres). One additional benefit for biomass removal or chipping is the reduction in the amount of smoke produced that would otherwise occur through burning within these areas.
Because these areas are addressed in past project planning and the actions proposed here fall within the scope of those projects, further environmental analysis and documentation is not needed to implement this proposal.
The initiation of prescribed fire treatments or biomass contracts will be conducted under the appropriate and approved prescription for weather, fuel and available implementation resources.

- Describe what Round 11 is specifically funding; list the number of years the requested funding will cover; briefly describe how this project links into previous and future projects, and identify other round funding.

NOTE: *Focus should be on finishing current/phased projects. If project is new in Round 11, clearly identify if the project is for planning or implementation and how it will be completed with Round 11 funds. Identify if Round 12 or other funds will be needed to complete the project. Please identify total non-SNPLMA funds that are being contributed/dedicated to the proposed Round 11 project and the source of those funds.*

This round of funding for this project would specifically cover implementation of prescribed burning and removing and/or chipping biomass of existing hand piles and fuels that were produced from thinning treatments. Acreage for these treatments would total 2,262 acres within the WUI from a combination of 5 projects (Ward, Quail, Slaughterhouse, and Roundhill) on the East and West Shores. Round 12 funding is not needed to complete this project. Prescribed burning and biomass removal funding is already included in SNPLMA Rounds 9-11. Specific deliverables of this project include the following:

1. Stakeholder Involvement (community, public, and inter-agency consultation).

   This includes public education and media releases to communities and neighborhoods for notification of project work. Coordination of project activities with other implementing fire districts and personnel would occur.

2. Burn plans completed.

   This includes documentation of mapping and identification of burning areas, burning prescriptions, mitigations and required resources to carry-out implementation for each year.

3. Agreements or contracts for the removal of biomass.

   This includes issuing and administering agreements between local fire district crews and contracts to other agencies or contractors for removing biomass.

4. Completion of fuels treatments on 2,262 acres.

The requested funding will cover four years to allow for the implementation of treatments. Yearly treatment acreage may vary but would average approximately 570 acres per year.

- Describe the "readiness" of this project to move forward (urgency, capacity, capability, environmental documentation, interagency agreements, etc)

This project is ready to move forward and is expected to be completed in 4 years. The density of forest stands surrounding the project area as well as heavy fuel loading and record low fuel moistures would make suppressing a possible wildfire under extreme weather conditions difficult to fire managers. As noted in above sections fuels are in a condition ready for burning or biomass treatment. The location of these fuels warrants immediate attention in order to increase fire suppression capabilities within the Wildland Urban Interface communities on the East and West Shores of Lake Tahoe. Without these necessary treatments, priority areas identified within the Lake Tahoe Basin Multi-jurisdictional Fuels Reduction and Wildfire Prevention Strategy would not be completed.
The LTBMU fuels program has demonstrated a capacity for treating over 1,500 acres per year using prescribed burning treatments. In addition, agreements between fire protection districts and fire departments are in place and could easily be modified to address treatments within this proposal. Finally, the Forest Service has demonstrated the dedication to biomass market development and removal with the issuance of grants to Fire Safe Councils and local governments. Recently (in 2009) the LTBMU and Placer County went under contract agreement to remove biomass piles as opposed to burning them on the West Shore in the McKinney Rubicon area. This was implemented at the same costs to the LTBMU as it would be to burn the piles based on other funding sources supplied to Placer county. This proved a success for removing these materials, and supplied local biomass demand. The LTBMU expects to use this same contract process to allow Placer County or other entities the opportunity to remove biomass at similar costs to burning where the access allows. Environmental analysis and documentation is complete for treatments to occur. This documentation is under the following projects: Ward Fuel Hazard Reduction Environmental Assessment (EA) (2002), Quail Vegetation and Fuels Treatment EA (2005), Slaughterhouse Vegetation and Fuels Treatment EA (2005), Kingsbury Fuel Reduction Project Categorical Exclusion (2006) and the Roundhill Fuel Reduction Project EA (2007).

- Describe partnerships for this project. (if applicable, project should identify committed/secured partner funding and/or other partner contributions (describe) and how it is integrated into the project)

This project partners with the Lake Tahoe Regional Fire Chiefs Association, Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District, North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District, Lake Valley Fire Protection District, Fire Safe Council, and Placer County.

Fire protection districts, the Fire Safe Council, and Placer County would be allowed under agreement to conduct prescribed burning and biomass chipping/removal. Partners would contribute their personnel and equipment in order to carry-out implementation. Other partners may be used to conduct project work.

Note: *The form requests information about project goals, objectives, accomplishments, and questions the program is designed to answer across several different sections. These issues are closely linked and your individual responses should provide a cohesive description.*

Goal – Purpose and Need (“larger” statement of future expected outcome – usually not measurable)

The goals of this project are to reduce fuel loadings within the Wildland Urban Interface and restore fire dependent healthy ecosystems and enhance fire suppression capabilities.

Objectives (specific measurable statements of action which when completed will move towards achieving the goal)

Note: *Objectives will form the basis for the milestones/deliverables to be identified in Appendix B-8*

- Describe how fulfilling objectives will contribute to the achievement of one or more environmental thresholds (air quality, water quality, soil conservation, vegetation, fisheries, wildlife, scenic, noise, recreation). Provide measures if applicable. For example: acres treated, miles of stream restored for each objective.

Proposal would complete Defense and Threat zone treatments identified in the Lake Tahoe Basin Multi-Jurisdictional Fuel Reduction and Wildfire Prevention Strategy.

The objectives are to reduce surface fuel loads from fuel reduction activities on approximately 2,262 acres of thinned treatment areas as shown on attached maps. Upon completion of the prescribed fire treatments, the vegetation condition will be improved through the creation of forest stand structure that has the fire resistance, species richness, abundance and pattern identified for the Common Vegetation Threshold. Project design criteria and Best Management Practices applicable to this proposal would be included in the burn plan and contracts to protect water quality from soil erosion. Implementing this project would reduce the risk to water quality and soil degradation should the area be affected by a catastrophic wildfire. This project would help maintain the Water Quality and Soil Conservation Thresholds should a wildfire affect this area.

- Describe the estimated environmental risks from unintended consequences of the proposed project (if applicable)**.**

None estimated.

Accomplishments

- Describe the anticipated project accomplishments (i.e. products or identifiable environmental benefits being produced or implemented under this project)

Note: *Differentiate between direct and/or primary project effects and secondary and/or overall watershed effects.*

Primary Effects - removal of activity fuels generated by thinning
- reduced fuel loading to provide for defensible space adjacent to communities and private property from wildfires
- improved fire suppression capabilities

Secondary benefits anticipated to result from project implementation include:

- The composition, species richness, and function of forested areas and associated wildlife and plant communities will be improved;
- A more sustainable and resilient fire regime (movement of the landscape towards fire regime condition classes 2 and 1)
- Forests will be in a condition that are fairly open and dominated primarily by larger, fire tolerant trees within the WUI defense zone;
- The risk of adverse effects from wildfire to soil productivity and water quality will be reduced;

- Describe how the project results/accomplishments will be communicated and made available to the public.

Monitoring activities and results will be summarized in the LTBMU Forest Monitoring Program Annual Report. Project and program specific monitoring reports will be produced within one to five years after project implementation, depending on the variables being monitored and the questions to be answered. In addition the LTBMU will periodically produce a Comprehensive Five Year Evaluation Report as part of the Forest Plan Monitoring Requirement. All monitoring reports will be posted on the LTBMU external website. The audiences (public, agencies, and research community) will be informed through email lists, and public and interagency meetings.

- If you checked "yes" for the project being consistent with and contributes to TMDL pollutant reductions please consider and integrate the following in the project description:

a) Describe whether, and how, the project demonstrates advanced, alternative, or innovative practices.

N/A

b) If project includes project level monitoring, describe ability of proposed monitoring strategy to contribute to the state of TMDL knowledge. Also describe if purpose of the capital project is to conduct data collection and/or analysis related to Lake Tahoe clarity.

N/A

c) Describe treatment approach for reducing pollutants and/or measures to address connectivity between pollutant sources and Lake Tahoe or its tributaries. Identify target pollutants, and, to the degree feasible, provide quantitative estimates of project effectiveness at reducing pollutant loads (and/or a commitment to provide post-project estimates).

N/A

d) If appropriate, describe whether, and how, the project can be combined or coordinated with other TMDL implementation projects.

N/A

Monitoring

- Describe the project monitoring that will be implemented as part of this project including:

  - List the questions the monitoring program is designed to answer.

Were soil and water quality protection BMPs implemented as planned/designed and are they effective at protecting soil and water quality? What are the effects of fuels reduction practices on soil and water quality?

  - Describe any coordination with, or input from, the science community on monitoring and adaptive management that has occurred on the development of this nomination and what changes (if any) to the project were made as a result of this input.

Monitoring protocols were developed with input from USFS researchers. No input solicited or received for this project nomination.

  - Describe the methods and strategies (i.e. monitoring, research, or both) that will be used to verify whether the project goals and objectives have been met? (*Note: A detailed monitoring plan and/or research plan is not required, however, enough detail must be provided to allow someone that is unfamiliar with the project to understand and evaluate the proposed methods and strategies.*)

Project Monitoring would tier to the environmental documentation identified within the five projects covered in this proposal. Prescribed Fire BMPs exist and would be monitored according to the below strategy. BMP monitoring will be conducted using Region 5 USFS BMPEP protocols, and a BMP implementation checklist. The BMPEP protocols walk the reviewer through a set of questions to evaluate whether BMPs were implemented as planned/designed and whether they were successful at protecting soil and water quality based on visual observations of erosion and sediment transport processes. The answers to these questions are then scored using a "rule set" imbedded within the database used to store the data, which rates the BMP evaluation as either successful or unsuccessful, for both implementation and effectiveness. The BMPEP data is input into a regional database to provide a statistically robust sample for each suite of BMPs across the region. The data provided is qualitative in nature, relying on visual observations

rather than quantitative measurements. BMPEP monitoring is funded through USFS appropriated funds and not through this project. The implementation checklist identifies all the BMPs identified in the NEPA document for the project, and evaluates whether the BMPs were implemented as described.

The soil quality monitoring program is conducted on a programmatic basis, i.e. not every unit or project is monitored. However units are selected for monitoring that represent either a unique management practice or soil characteristics, not previously monitored. Soil quality measurements include Ksat, bulk density, and soil cover. These data are then input into the WEPP model to estimate runoff and erosion response from the management practice on that unit (see previous analysis utilizing these protocols on the LTBMU website for the Ward and Heavenly SEZ projects). It has not been determined at this time whether specific units from this project will be selected for this more in depth soil quality monitoring.

- Describe whether the monitoring or research associated with this project fits into or is part of a larger monitoring or research program.

The BMPEP is part of a Regional Monitoring Program within the Forest Service, and may be adopted nationally. All protocols are part of the large Soil and Water Quality Monitoring Program at the LTBMU.

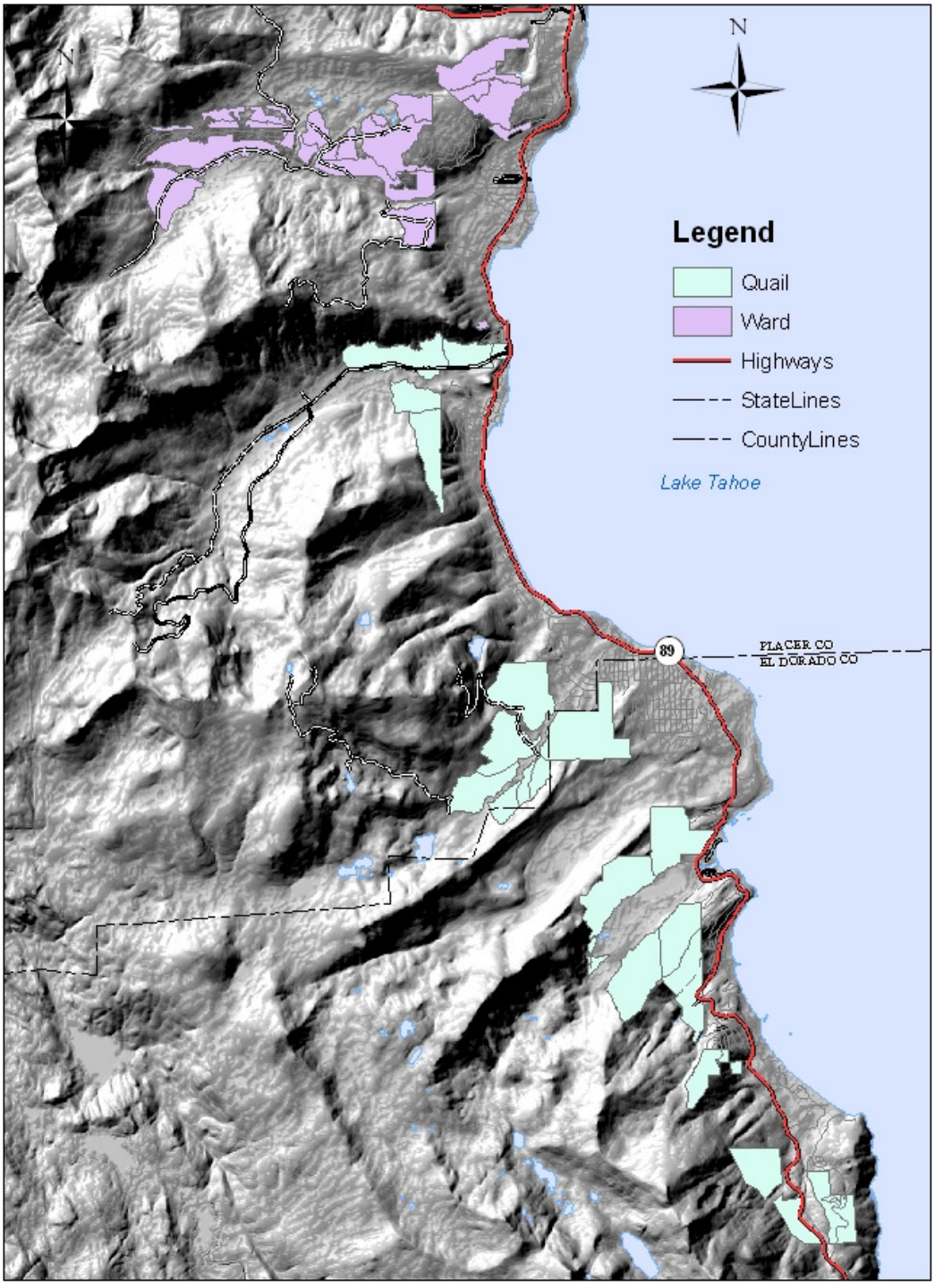
- Describe how information from the monitoring and/or research will be used to improve the continued performance of the proposed project or future similar projects.

In the short term BMP information collected is used to fix or redesign individual project BMPs that are rated as unsuccessful. In the long term, BMP information is used at both the local and regional level to develop solutions to chronic problems identified in either implementation or effectiveness of BMPs. Information from the soil quality monitoring program will be used to validate whether and under what conditions different fuels reduction management practices can be utilized with the Tahoe Basin without causing adverse impacts to soil or water quality.

Attachments

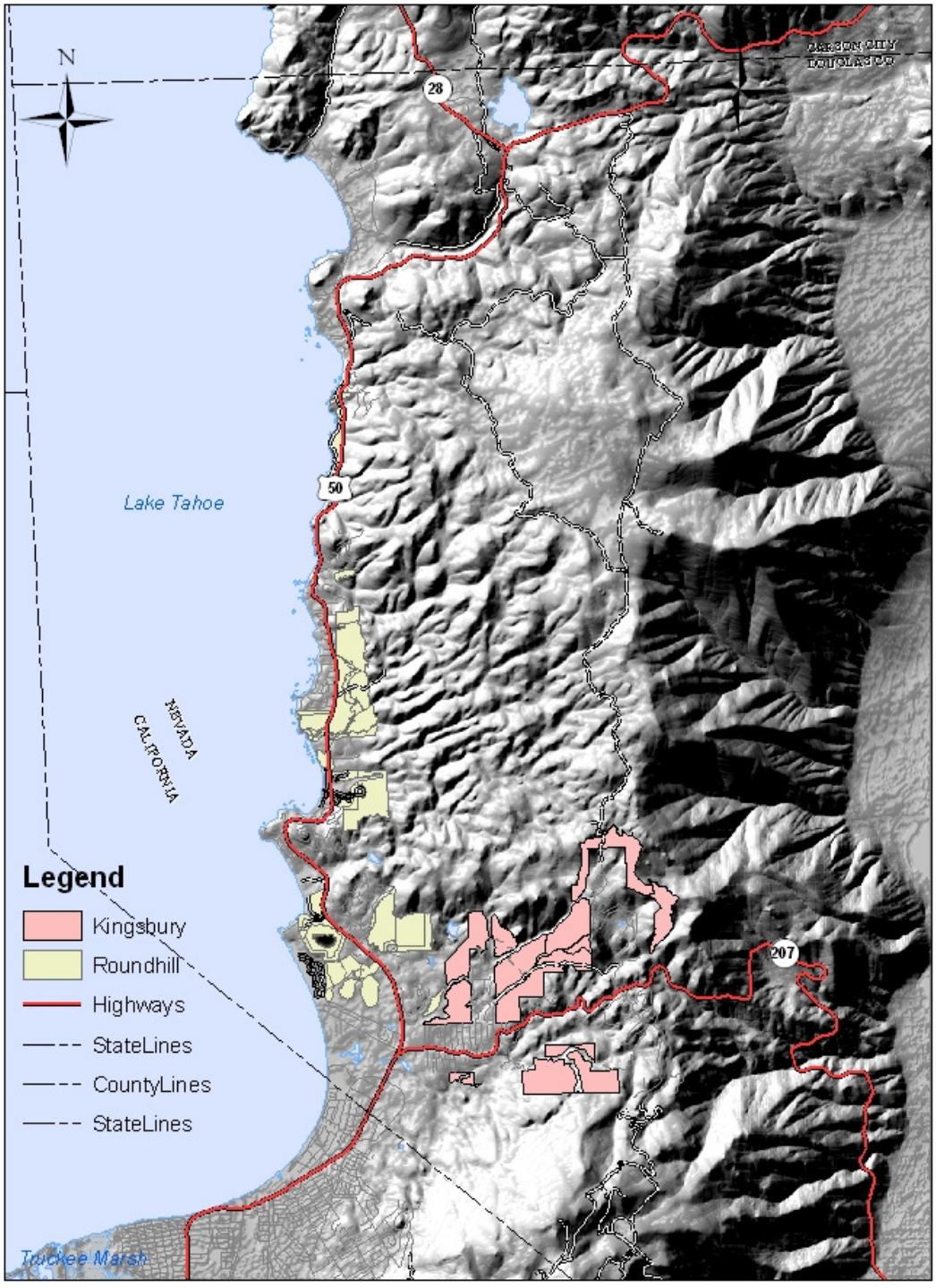
- See Attached Maps for location of treatment stands.

Project Location Map



Quail and Ward Project Areas

Project Location Map



Kingsbury and Roundhill Project Areas

Appendix B-8

LAKE TAHOE RESTORATION PROJECTS
ESTIMATED NECESSARY EXPENSES & KEY MILESTONE DATES

Project Name:	Prescribed Fire Treatment	Agency:	USFS- Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit
Prepared by:	John Washington	Phone:	530-543-2652
SNPLMA Project #:		EIP #:	

Identify estimated costs of eligible reimbursement expenses:

1. Planning, Environmental Assessment and Research Costs (specialist surveys, reports, monitoring, data collection, analysis, NEPA, etc.)	$ 10,000	< 1 %
2. FWS Consultation – Endangered Species Act	$ 0	0 %
3. Direct Labor (Payroll) to Perform the Project	$ 520,000	42 %
4. Project Equipment (tools, software, specialized equipment, etc.)	$ 10,000	< 1 %
5. Travel (including per diem where official travel status required to carry out project, such as serve as COR, experts to review reports, etc.)	$ 15,000	1 %
6. Official Vehicle Use (pro rata cost for use of Official Vehicles when required to carry out project)	$ 20,000	1 %
7. Cost of Contracts, Grants and/or Agreements to Perform the Project	$ 305,000	24 %
8. Other Direct and Contracted Labor: Agency payroll for the Contracting Officer to do project procurement, COR, Project Inspector, Sec. 106 Consultation if required, NEPA Lead, Project Manager, Project Supervisor, and subject experts to review contracted surveys, designs/drawings, plans, reports, etc.; Also covered is the cost to contract for a Project Manager and/or Project Supervisor if contracted separately from other project contracts)	$ 220,000	18 %
9. Other Necessary Expenses (see Appendix B-9)	$ 150,000	12 %
TOTAL:	$ 1,250,000	100 %

Estimated Key Milestone Dates:

Milestones/Deliverables:	Date:
Initial Burn Plans Prepared and Completed	4/1/2011
Agreements Completed	4/1/2011
Complete work	12/31/2014
Begin Project Closeout	6/1/2015
Final Completion Date: 12/31/2015	

COMMENTS:

Burn Plans would be prepared on an annual basis and are required to document planned burning each year. Agreements for prescribed burning using other agencies would take place as well as biomass removal contracts for approximatley 220 acres in 2010. Over 2,200 acres would be treated with completion of proposal.